

**CALIFORNIA WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD
STATE YOUTH COUNCIL**

**January 31, 2002
Sacramento, California**

DRAFT MINUTES

Members of the State Youth Council of the California Workforce Investment Board (State Board) met in Sacramento on January 31, 2002. A list of the Council members who attended this meeting is attached.

Welcome, Introductions, and Opening Remarks

Ms. Ann Savage, Chair of the State Youth Council, welcomed all participants. She stated that although there is no federal mandate to establish a State Youth Council, the State Board decided that creating a Youth Council would be beneficial to the State. Ms. Savage said the purpose of the State Youth Council is to work with local youth councils, develop youth policy and present recommendations to the State Board. The Board intended for the Youth Council to focus on broader youth development issues, not just Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs.

Ms. Savage informed the State Youth Council members that they would have an opportunity to get to know each other. She proceeded to outline the agenda which included: a number of experts providing background information, hearing presentations from a youth panel at lunch, followed by the State Youth Council focusing its attention on setting priorities and defining next steps. In order to obtain input from the public, Ms. Savage indicated that two public hearings would be arranged, one in northern California and one in southern California. She encouraged people to visit the State Board's Web site for more information and meeting schedules.

Ms. Savage introduced Mr. Andrew Baron, Executive Director of the State Board. Mr. Baron welcomed State Youth Council members and expressed his enthusiasm and excitement about the development of the Youth Council. He stated that the State Youth Council provides an excellent opportunity for California to build a comprehensive youth service system and enhance youth development in the state. Mr. Baron then read a welcoming letter from Governor Davis. Mr. Baron also described some of his visits to one-stop centers and youth programs throughout the state and concluded by saying he looked forward to working more closely with all State Youth Council members.

State Youth Council members introduced themselves, identified their affiliations, and discussed their expectations for the State Youth Council. They expressed interest in working together to leverage resources, providing guidance to local youth councils, developing strategies to better address hard-to-serve populations, forming collaborative partnerships, making youth aware of future opportunities, developing a more comprehensive and integrated system of delivering services to youth, involving youth in the policy-making process, providing leadership, focusing on a few areas that will make a difference in the immediate future, promoting development of soft skills, engaging youth in learning activities so they stay in school, and building long-term career ladders for non-college-bound youth.

Workforce Investment Act Overview

Mr. John Merris-Coots, provided a brief overview of the Workforce Investment Act and the populations it targets. He described the roles of local workforce investment boards and local youth councils. He discussed the ten program elements and the six purposes of the WIA youth program. Mr. David Crippens stated that although 2002 is the second year of WIA operation, as a the five-year bill enacted in 1998 the authorization period extends only to 2003, and then WIA will be up for reauthorization.

Youth Council Institute Update

Mr. Steve Trippe, Executive Director, New Ways to Work, and Ms. Lois Ann Porter, Youth Council Institute (YCi) Director, provided members with background information on the development of the YCi and reviewed YCi activities since its inception. Mr. Trippe explained that the YCi resulted from a decision by the State Board to establish a state level project to assist local youth councils in developing comprehensive local systems to reach all youth in California. New Ways to Work and the California Workforce Association are jointly operating the YCi under a two-year contract from the State Board.

Mr. Trippe reviewed the YCi handouts provided to State Youth Council members. He stated that YCi developed a logo depicting its "All Youth, One System" slogan and three sets of road maps to guide local youth councils in the development of comprehensive service systems. Ms. Porter informed the members that a series of focus group sessions led to the creation of the road maps. She explained that orientation sessions were held and that 42 of the 50 youth councils in California participated in those meetings. In January, 30 of the 50 youth council participated in three day institutes to undertake strategic planning utilizing the YCi tools. Ms. Porter said YCi created a list of resources and needs, and a network is being developed for local youth councils to share information on successes and common problems. She encouraged State Youth Council members to visit the YCi Web site (www.nww.org/yci) for more information.

Mr. Crippens and Ms. Nellie McGarry, State Youth Council members who serve on their local youth councils, commented that participating in the YCi sessions has been extremely helpful for their local youth councils.

Mr. Trippe noted the California Workforce Association is sponsoring a youth conference in Palm Springs the following week. He stated that they expect over 600 youth practitioners would be attending the sold-out event.

National Perspective - WIA and Youth Development

Mr. David Brown of the National Youth Employment Coalition (NYEC) explained that the purpose of his organization is to provide a vehicle for exchanging information with youth employment/development organizations. He stated that to achieve this goal, the NYEC developed a Promising and Effective Practices Network (PEPNet) to provide information on best practices and establish a set of criteria for recognizing effective practices. Mr. Brown described how local youth councils and local workforce boards can use PEPNet as a tool. He urged the State Youth Council and California Workforce Investment Board to take advantage of

its resources as well. Mr. Brown also discussed key elements in integrating youth development and workforce development programs and some of the major challenges.

Discussion ensued following Mr. Brown's presentation which included a concern that many at-risk youth are not being reached because of problems with eligibility. Dr. O.Cliff Brazil stated that this results in unspent funds, giving the erroneous impression that there is no demand for services. Ms. Rita Cepeda emphasized the importance of demonstrating need during the upcoming WIA reauthorization process. Mr. Joseph Werner observed that income eligibility is particularly frustrating in California, where the cost of living and cost of housing is so high. In the process of reauthorization, he recommended modifying youth eligibility criteria to be consistent with the treatment of "adult economically disadvantaged," where local workforce boards can take into account the economic situations in their communities in setting eligibility criteria. Mr. Brown added that under the previous law, eligibility could be tied to eligibility for the national school lunch program, but that provision was mistakenly omitted from the WIA.

Clarification was requested on whether all WIA elements are mandated. Mr. Brown clarified that each local workforce area is required to provide all ten elements to youth within their region, but the ten elements do not have to be met by a single provider. He noted WIA resources are insufficient to fund all the services, so it is imperative to collaborate and develop partnerships among providers. Mr. Brown noted that a number of opportunities exist for youth development activities in the future, including an emphasis on older youth, fathers, and transitional employment as part of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) reauthorization; a Department of Health and Human Services youth development initiative; linkages with the juvenile justice system; possible passage of the Younger Americans Act in 2002; a National Academy of Sciences report on the positive impacts of community youth development programs; and increasing interest in alternative education programs. (Information is available on the NYEC web site at www.nyec.org)

Mr. Brown reviewed a list of possible federal and state funding sources for youth programs. He noted that the recent recession is hitting hardest on youth, particularly youth in high-poverty communities, so reducing resources for youth programs at this time would be particularly detrimental.

Mr. Brown discussed the role of a state youth council. He recommended not limiting the scope of the Council's activities to WIA implementation alone; promoting collaboration; supporting local youth councils; and establishing meaningful criteria for service providers. Mr. Brown said the Youth Council should focus on youth populations of most concern to the state, such as juvenile offenders, youth leaving foster care, and teen parents and youth in TANF families.

Youth in California

Mr. Chris Stiehl, StiehlWorks Consulting, stated that he conducted a detailed study on the needs of Fresno youth called "The Voice of Youth". He said his work entailed one-on-one interviews to identify local needs, compiling a comprehensive list of youth wants and needs, organizing the needs into categories, and prioritizing the categories. Mr. Stiehl presented a large chart depicting the results of this work and explained how the chart was organized. He discussed key elements and priorities.

Dr. Brazil observed that many good students are not properly counseled about their post-

secondary and career options. State Youth Council members discussed the importance of exposing youth to a variety of experiences: the role served by community colleges, and recruiting mentors and volunteers. Mr. Crippens emphasized the importance of serving the whole child by providing a comprehensive range of services and support systems to address all needs fully.

Mr. Stiehl encouraged local youth councils to make use of the questionnaires and survey tools developed for the Fresno Youth Council. He added that he is in the process of surveying employers in the Fresno area to determine their needs, and he suggested conducting a staff needs assessment as well.

Youth Panel Discussion

Mr. Michael Serna, Valley Business High School in Modesto, Ms. Bou Lor, Yuba County Office of Education, and Mr. Santino Barksdale, Sacramento Employment and Training Agency, presented their personal backgrounds and experiences during a lunchtime youth panel. Mr. Serna said that when he dropped out of high school last year, he felt pessimistic about his future, but enrolling at the Valley Business High School has changed that perspective. Mr. Serna stated that his school provides the opportunity for students to work as interns with local businesses and receive one-on-one training. He expressed his appreciation to the school principal and teachers for their encouragement and support. Ms. Lor noted that the counselors in her program work closely with each student to instill confidence. She also said that paid work experience gives students a chance to earn while learning. Mr. Barksdale stated that when he first came to the Youth Opportunity Program (YOP) as a client, an older youth convinced him to join the program and better himself. Through the program, Mr. Barksdale emphasized that he has enjoyed working on the local youth council and participating in community activities. He added he was eventually hired to work as a staff member at YOP. He also advocated more recreational and athletic programs so teens have more constructive ways of spending their time.

Ms. Cepeda observed that all speakers had cited the importance of personal relationships and encouragement. She noted high school students need to be made more aware of opportunities and options available to them. Mr. Serna said the students at his school give presentations and demonstrations on a regular basis, and this practice in public speaking has been helpful in building confidence and self-esteem. He also credited his mother for her ongoing encouragement and support. Mr. Barksdale added that having people care about him made a big difference in his attitude. He emphasized the importance of basic support factors and personal attention.

Ms. Sonia Hernandez asked the panelists what they would change about their school systems. Mr. Barksdale responded that economic disparities were a big issue in his high school, and factors like dress and outer appearance were obstacles for many students. In addition, classmates from upper-class backgrounds had little in common with people from his neighborhood, which led to feelings of isolation. Mr. Barksdale said his reaction had been to skip school. Mr. Serna said he was an under-achiever throughout elementary and high school because people were always telling him he could not do things. However, his mother's confidence and the teachers at Valley High School made him feel more motivated to excel in school. Mr. Serna reported that his last report card featured his best grades ever. Ms. Lor noted the older kids at her school sometimes make life difficult for younger students. She

recommended working with the younger and shyer students to help them learn to better express themselves.

Ms. Thompson-Balsis invited suggestions about ways of reaching out to at-risk youth. Mr. Barksdale recommended inviting speakers from similar backgrounds to talk to local youth about the consequences of their present choices. He said he was particularly influenced by a talk given by an ex-convict. He noted the chance to own a home and have a good career can be an important motivating factor to many students.

Ms. Savage and State Youth Council members expressed appreciation to the youth panelists for their presentations.

Prioritizing Issues Identified by State Youth Council Members and Nominees

State Youth Council members separated into three groups for facilitated priority-setting discussions and each group then voted for its top priorities. Ms. Savage reconvened the larger group and the State Youth Council members reviewed the issues on the list to establish initial workgroups.

During the discussion, members talked about the definition of “at-risk youth” and prioritized issues identified during the smaller group discussions. Dr. Brazil suggested that “at risk” includes any young person who is at risk of not achieving his or her goals. Members also agreed to combine “Policies at the State and Local Level” with the item regarding “Law and Policies in Relationship to WIA implementation.” State Youth Council members then each voted for their top four priorities. The issues with the most votes were: 1) Creating a Vision for California Youth (helping youth councils align education, workforce development, economic development, and social service agencies); 2) Law and Policies in Relationship to WIA Implementation; and 3) Comprehensive Youth System.

Dr. Brazil stated that he objected to designating these three items as the State Youth Council’s priorities. He noted that there are many other pressing issues that should not be ignored. Mr. Crippens suggested that some of those elements could be subsumed within the three priorities identified. Ms. Barbara Becnel proposed establishing a fourth group with a more all-encompassing scope. Ms. Savage suggested a group on “Critical Youth Needs,” including at-risk youth, bridging gaps in services, adult mentors, and out-of-school youth programs.

Ms. Thompson-Balsis recommended forming a fifth group on developing safe and healthy communities, addressing childcare, alienation, peer pressure, personal safety, alcoholism, teen pregnancy, broken families, and other issues. Mr. David Rattray noted the State Youth Council could work on fleshing out each issue in more detail at future meetings. Ms. Ariel Smoke strongly recommended including more youth in the process.

Ms. Savage summarized the discussion by noting that there appeared to be five categories: the three items receiving the most votes, plus critical youth needs and youth involvement. She asked State Board Staff to work with the State Youth Council members over the next two weeks to establish the initial work groups and notify members via email.

Next Steps

Ms. Savage suggested that the staff contact State Youth Council members by email about their interest in serving on the workgroups. Once the groups are established, she recommended scheduling meetings sometime before the next State Youth Council meeting on April 18, 2002.

Mr. Bill Lloyd commented that Governor Davis has placed a high priority on youth development, and he expressed his confidence that the dedicated members of the State Youth Council will work hard to improve delivery of services to youth.

Closing Comments

Ms. Savage thanked the California Association of Student Councils for facilitating the priorities discussion and announced that the next State Youth Council Meeting will be on April 18, 2002 in Pasadena, California. She also announced that the next two meetings would be on August 14 and November 20 and that there will also be two public hearings one in northern California and one in Southern California. The meeting was adjourned at 3:09 p.m.

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Members in Attendance

Steve Arcelona, Director, Treasure Island Job Corps

Jorge Ayala, Yolo County Superintendent of Schools

Barbara Becnel, Executive Director, Neighborhood House of North Richmond

Dr. O. Cliff Brazil, Pastor Brown Memorial AME Church

Ken Burt, State Board Member and Political Director, CA Federation of Teachers

Orlando Casillas, Jr., Youth Representative for Friday Night Live

Rita Cepeda, President of Santa Ana College

David Crippens, CEO of DLC & Associates

Dr. Bernard Davitto, Executive Director and co-founder of Alliance for Education

Susan Fisher, Dean of Curriculum and Instruction at Center for Advanced Research and Technology in Clovis

Erron Franklin, President and California Association of Student Councils (CASC) Youth Representative

Erin Gabel, Project Director of Bay Area Partnership

Myeshia Grice, Young Adult Representative for the California Youth Connection

Sonia Hernandez, President and CEO of the Los Angeles County Alliance for Student Achievement

Bill A. Lloyd, Director of Labor Affairs and Senate Relations, Governor Office

Nellie McGarry, Business Owner

David Rattray, President/Executive Director UNITE-LA

Ann Savage, State Youth Council Chair, State Board Member and Director of Fund Development, LA Conservation Corps

Hermalinda Sapien, President/Chief Executive Officer of the Center for Employment Training (CET)

Ariel Smoke, Youth Representative For 4-H Ambassadors

Dorothy Thompson, Founder & Executive Director of Streetlights

Officer David Tos, Community Relations Police Officer for SDPD

Joseph Werner, Executive Director, Monterey County Local Workforce Investment Area

Scott Wetch, State Building and Construction Trades Council of California

Dr. Carl Wong, State Youth Council Vice-Chair, Superintendent of Petaluma City School District